

**PERFORMANCE OF ENTRY LEVEL ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN SECOND  
LANGUAGE (PARAGRAPH) WRITING – A STUDY**

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**Abstract:**

*English, an important language is composed of four focal skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Although these skills are interrelated, developing the writing skill has been purely ignored mainly due to the conventional approaches of teaching the language. So, students become weaker in the writing skills particularly, composition-writing. This study has been conducted to examine the performance of second language paragraph writing and the use of the Task Based Approach in enriching the paragraph writing of first year engineering students.*

**Keywords:** Task-Based Language Teaching, Composition Writing, Language Classroom

**Introduction:**

The classroom environment plays a major part in learning. The atmosphere is more essential for a student. The Students have a different psychological stimulus when performing the activities inside the classroom. The classroom atmosphere helps the students in learning the foreign language. The teacher must balance themselves to the need of students. Very few students find that learning a second language is really a tedious work. A good teacher should clearly recognize all the problems that are faced by their own students and should put their utmost efforts to bring out possible solutions. The second language writing is a tough job among the college students because of their lack of confidence on the foreign language. Especially engineering college students find composition-writing, a complex task because they have been taught to memorize the samples provided by their teachers right from their school days.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Students face a radical transformation in the total surrounding while they step-in the college. The students find a challenging time in the process of writing as they have to write the composition part by their own. As there are numerous approaches, methods and techniques to enrich the knowledge-level of students, there is an undeniable fact that not all the techniques of teaching help students to understand well. Many students show less interest in learning the techniques behind writing the second language. Most of the teachers don't worry about whether their students understand the concept or not and they will not make any modifications in their mode of teaching as well. Majorly, they follow the lecture method and often dictate notes to copy down. Typically, students will think that they might commit blunders on certain aspects like spelling, grammar, organization, punctuation, etc. Such as, there are various reasons for the students' slackness in second language writing. Based on this background, a study has been undertaken to identify the performance level of students and proposing some suitable measures to enrich the writing.

### **Earlier Research:**

The earlier researches primarily emphasize on the writing skills of students in learning the second language. In terms of skills, producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in languages. It is something most native speakers never master. For second language learners, the challenges are enormous, particularly for those who go on to a university and study in a language that is not their own (Nunan, 1999).

Written products are often the results of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally (Brown, 2001).

We must realize that writing a language comprehensibly is much more difficult than speaking it (Rivers, 1981).

Ziahosseiny (2007) states that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.

Nunan (1989: 36) believes that "at the sentences level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence level, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts".

### **Methodology:**

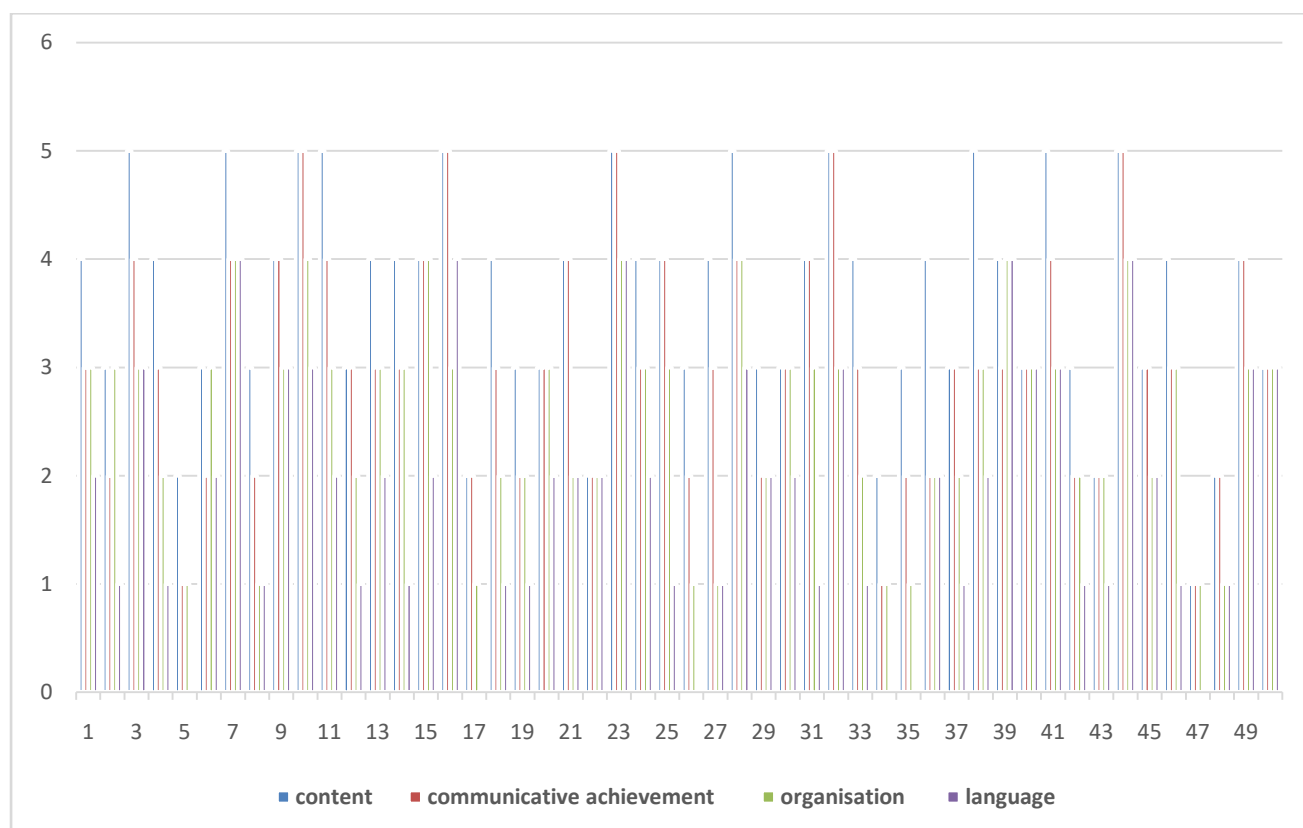
First year Computer Science Engineering students with the class strength of 50 were taken for study. The students were asked to write a paragraph on "Role of Engineers" in about 250 words. The researcher used BEC writing assessment criteria (B2) for evaluation.

<b>Roll.no</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Communicative achievement</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Language</b>
1	4	3	3	2
2	3	2	3	1
3	5	4	3	3
4	4	3	2	1
5	2	1	1	0
6	3	2	3	2
7	5	4	4	4
8	3	2	1	1
9	4	4	3	3
10	5	5	4	3
11	5	4	3	2
12	3	3	2	1
13	4	3	3	2
14	4	3	3	1
15	4	4	4	2
16	5	5	3	4
17	2	2	1	0
18	4	3	2	1
19	3	2	2	1
20	3	3	3	2
21	4	4	2	2
22	2	2	2	2
23	5	5	4	4
24	4	3	3	2
25	4	4	3	1
26	3	2	1	0
27	4	3	1	1
28	5	4	4	3
29	3	2	2	2
30	3	3	3	2
31	4	4	3	1
32	5	5	3	3
33	4	3	2	1
34	2	1	1	0
35	3	2	1	0
36	4	2	2	2
37	3	3	2	1

38	5	3	3	2
39	4	3	4	4
40	3	3	3	3
41	5	4	3	3
42	3	2	2	1
43	2	2	2	1
44	5	5	4	4
45	3	3	2	2
46	4	3	3	1
47	1	1	1	0
48	2	2	1	1
49	4	4	3	3
50	3	3	3	3

Fig. 1.1 Table showing the Writing Scores of students in BEC writing assessment pattern

The figures 1.1 & 1.2 show clearly that the written scripts of the students were analysed using the BEC pattern which consists of four sub-scales: content, communicative achievement, organisation and language. The answers were evaluated on each sub-scale from 0 to 5. The students were able to write the content quite good since they have their own viewpoints on the topic in mind irrespective of organisation, style and grammar. It was in the average range of 4 & 3. The students got moderate scores in communicative achievement because they were not specific in choosing the appropriate information about the theme. The average range was between 4 & 3. The organisation focuses on putting words together, in other words if it is logical and ordered. The figures have shown an average of 3 & 2. At the same time, the students scored below par on language aspects i.e. sentence structure, simple tenses, punctuation, etc. The average grade was between 3 & 1. The organisation and the language are the prerequisite parameters to be taken stringent care by the students because most of them failed to sequence the ideas logically which in turn showed the poor organisation. Therefore, the students must be instructed and practised properly on the tasks given in the classroom.



**Fig. 1.2 Chart showing the writing scores of students assessed in BEC writing assessment pattern**

### Findings:

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has identified that composition writing is a critical task which involves many sub-skills. BEC writing assessment has an effective impact on paragraph writing. The evaluation of the students' written scripts is the decisive factor in developing students' composition writing as they are provided with feedback that is needed for their improvement in composition writing.

### Discussion:

Learner-centric task based teaching is considered as a suitable method in the language classroom since tasks aid the students to perform freely without any fear or difficulty in the whole learning environment. The students are put to work in the small groups. Each and every student in the group will be promptly motivated to participate in the activity. They can share their ideas and opinions to the other groups too. The students work is to concentrate on their topic and carrying out the activities in various forms like worksheets, etc. Teachers should pick meaningful tasks depends upon the level of students. The success of the task

depends on the performing level of students and the results. The choice and the use of activities must really be purposeful, motivating and challenging to the students who find a platform to hone up their writing skills.

**Conclusion:**

Finally, based on the findings, it is clearly understood that the students felt exhausted by the rules that they have to learn in writing English without knowing how to apply the procedure to get succeed. A possible explanation for this might be that the focus of learning activity is on form rather than the application. This means that if a language teacher only focuses on the grammatical structures in class, students will be unmotivated to write in the target language. Students should be exposed to the correct usage of written language so that they can apply the knowledge in a proper framework.

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